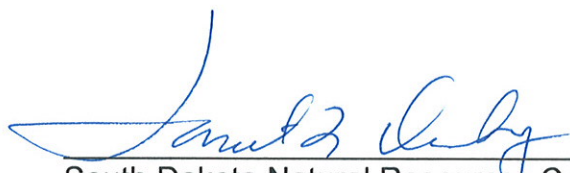


**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)
MAPPING CONVENTIONS FOR DETERMINING WETLANDS AND
POTENTIAL WETLANDS IN SOUTH DAKOTA AND NORTH DAKOTA**

For the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation,
and Trade Act of 1990 and the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996.

We, the undersigned, hereby adopt this document as the technical basis for the
identification of wetlands and potential wetlands by the NRCS.



South Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service

4/1/11

Date



North Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service

3/24/11

Date



South Dakota United States Fish and Wildlife Service

3-31-11

Date



North Dakota United States Fish and Wildlife Service

3/24/11

Date

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this document is to outline the procedure that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) could use to identify wetlands when adequate information currently exists for a site(s) and will use to identify potential wetlands when additional field information is necessary for portions and/or all of the project area. These mapping conventions are separate from, but must be used in conjunction with, the National Food Security Act Manual (NFSAM) and the approved onsite procedures document(s). The approved onsite procedures document(s) are based on the most current versions of the NFSAM, the 1987 United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wetland Delineation Manual, Technical Report Y-87-1 ('87 Manual), and/or USACE Regional Supplements.

The mapping convention signatory agencies have reached consensus on the mapping convention procedure. These mapping conventions take into account the regional, state, and local wetland characteristics unique to North Dakota (ND) and South Dakota (SD). This document adheres to regulations and policies in effect as of the date of this document but may be subject to change. If changes are proposed to the mapping conventions the changes must first receive the concurrence of the signatory agencies before their adoption by the SD and ND NRCS. If such modifications are necessitated by a change in statute, regulation, and/or national policy the signatory agencies will review the external changes and concur on any needed changes to the mapping convention procedure necessary to bring the procedure in line with statute, regulation, and/or national policy.

Persons identifying potential wetlands and conducting wetland determinations must have the appropriate "Wetland Job Approval Authority(s)" delegated and documented in accordance with current NRCS policy (Section III of the state Technical Guide). The NRCS decision-maker is reminded that size of an area is not part of the wetland criteria therefore, areas large enough to display evidence of potential wetlands on inventory tools and/or that are noted in the field will be considered.

There are two unique and distinct decisions required of the NRCS wetland decision-makers. First, a decision must be rendered regarding the presence or absence of a wetland. Second, a decision must be rendered regarding the appropriate NFSAM wetland label, based on the eligibility of the site to exemptions provided in the 1985 Food Security Act (the "Act"), as amended, and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Exemptions can be full (i.e., Non-Wetland, Prior Converted Cropland, Artificial Wetland) or with conditions (i.e., Farmed Wetland, Farmed Wetland Pasture). Refer to the CFR and the NFSAM for specific definitions.

PROCEDURE

The following section outlines the steps the SD and ND NRCS will use to determine if adequate information currently exists for a site(s) and when onsite inspection may be necessary for a site(s). Identified sites are called "potential wetlands" in this procedure until the user determines if an on-site inspection is necessary (e.g. identifies if adequate information is not currently available for the site or if the site meets any of the conditions in Step 4. *If adequate information is currently available then "potential wetlands" will either be wetland or nonwetland (see step 4).*

- Step 1: Preplanning and Remote Sensing
- Step 2: Selection of the Determination Method
- Step 3: Determine if Normal Circumstances Exists
- Step 4: Determining if Adequate Information Exists
- Step 5: Determine the Predominance of Hydric Soils
- Step 6: Determination of the Prevalence of Hydrophytic Vegetation
- Step 7: Determination of Wetland Hydrology
- Step 8: Making a Wetland Determination
- Step 9: Wetland Delineation

Step 1: Preplanning and Remote Sensing

To complete this step, the reviewer may choose to begin with one or more resources noted below to maximize the information on the location of potential wetlands. The NRCS policy, manual, and regulations do not limit the resources used.

ACTION:

- A. Review the soil survey and the state Technical Guide county hydric soils list to identify areas that may be potential wetlands. Identify listed hydric soil map units, map units with hydric soils as part of their name, or soils with hydric inclusions, and map units with conventional wetland symbols as evidence of potential wetlands.
 - B. Review the NRCS wetland inventory maps and official determinations, if available, to identify previously mapped wetlands as evidence of a potential wetland.
 - C. Review the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps to identify previously mapped wetlands as evidence of potential wetlands.
 - D. Based on knowledge of local conditions, review the appropriate Farm Service Agency (FSA) slide or slides selected from all available slides (regardless of annual precipitation), to identify evidence of potential wetlands. Any of the following signatures present on one or more slides would be considered as evidence of potential wetlands:
 - Hydrophytic vegetation
 - Surface water
 - Saturated conditions
 - Flooded or drowned-out crops
 - Stressed crops due to wetness
 - Differences in vegetation due to different planting dates
 - Inclusion of wet areas as set-aside or idled
 - Circular or irregular areas of unharvested crops within a harvested field
 - Isolated areas that are not farmed with the rest of the field
 - Areas of greener vegetation (especially during dry years)
 - E. Review all other inventory tools (where available) for evidence of potential wetlands.
 - F. Review the United States Geological Survey (USGS) NED 1/9 Arc Second LIDAR data if available for your county. This data provides 0.5-, 1-, 5-foot contours that may assist delineators in identifying manipulations and potential wetland geomorphic position.
- Proceed to the next step.

Step 2: Selection of the Determination Method

ACTION: Choose either Option A or Option B.

- Option A – Conduct onsite determination with offsite tool review.
 - Identify potential wetlands from Step 1 then review 1986 and prior year aerial photography and existing case file scope and effect documentation to determine if any manipulation occurred prior to December 23, 1985. Document findings and proceed to Step 5.
- Option B – Potentially conduct offsite determination. Proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: Determine if *Normal Circumstances Exist*

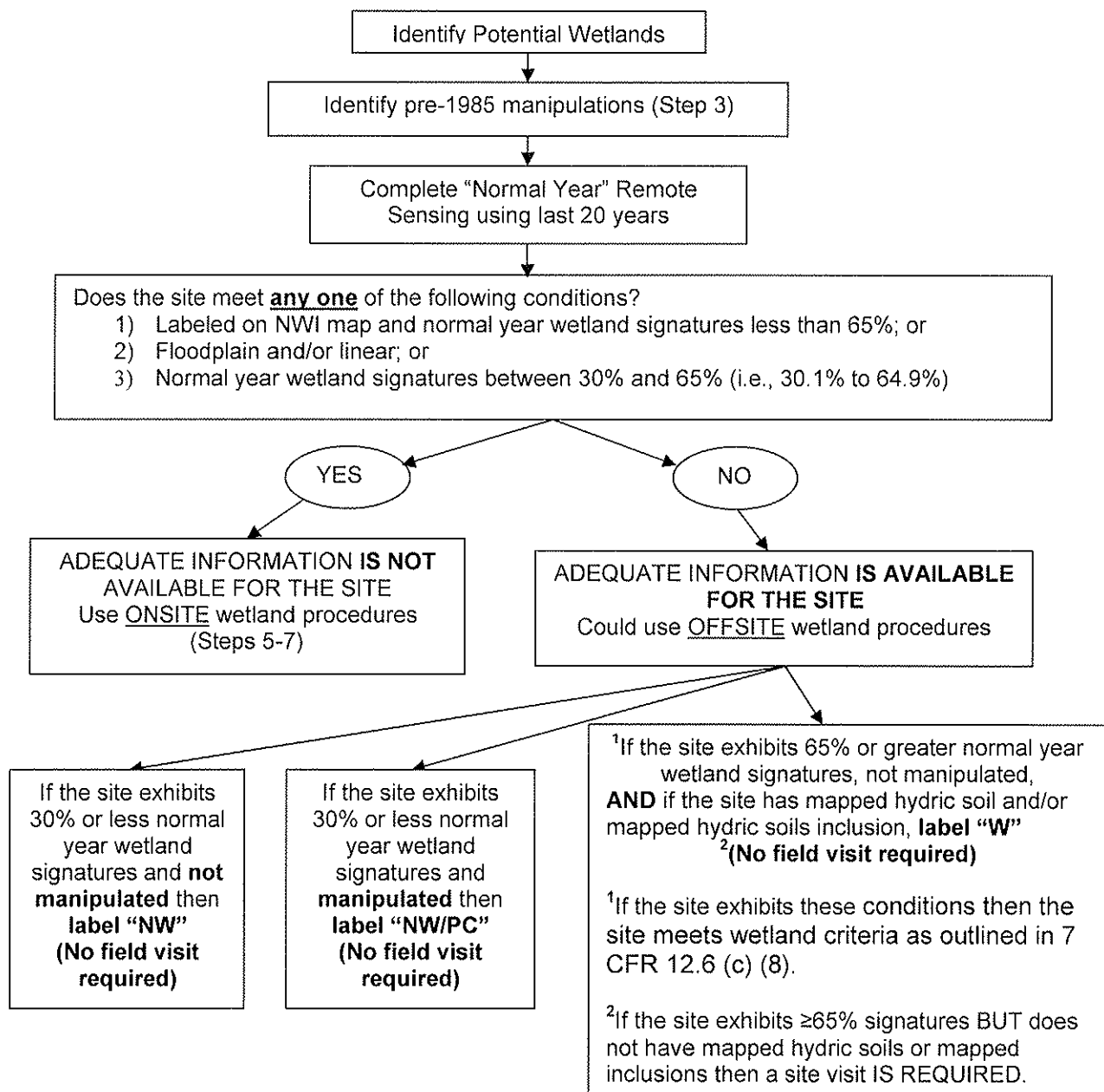
ACTION: Review the 1986 and prior year slides to determine if any manipulation occurred prior to December 23, 1985. Review existing case file scope and effect documentation.

- If *normal circumstances* remain, then proceed to Step 4.
- If the site has been disturbed such that *normal circumstances* do not exist, then you must go onsite. A comparison reference site may be used. The use of a reference site can be made in the field either after or during the site visit. Proceed to Step 5.

Step 4: Determining if Adequate Information Exists

ACTION: Determine if the site is a pothole or playa, follow the flow chart below and document the findings. A site field visit **is not** required if the site **meets the “offsite”** conditions; however, a site field visit is always an **option** to the wetland delineator. A field visit **is** required for any sites that are **appealed** or if a site **does not meet “offsite”** conditions.

- If all sites are determined to have adequate information and meet the offsite conditions then proceed to Step 8, otherwise proceed to Step 5 for potential wetlands not meeting offsite conditions.



Step 5: Determine the Predominance of Hydric Soils

ACTION: Refer to the approved onsite procedures document(s).

- If the site meets the hydric soils requirements, then document the findings (per form instructions). Proceed to Step 6.
- If the site fails to meet the hydric soil requirements, the area is not a wetland. No further investigation is required. Document the findings (per form instructions). Proceed to Step 8.

Step 6: Determination of the Prevalence of Hydrophytic Vegetation

ACTION: Refer to the approved onsite procedures document(s).

- If the site meets the hydrophytic vegetation requirement, then the vegetation is hydrophytic. Document the findings (per form instructions) and proceed to Step 7.
- If the site fails all of the hydrophytic vegetation tests, then hydrophytic vegetation is absent. Document the findings (per form instructions). Proceed to the Step 8.

Step 7: Determination of Wetland Hydrology

ACTION: Refer to the approved onsite procedures document(s).

- If the site meets the wetland hydrology requirements, then document the findings (per form instructions) and proceed to the Step 8.
- If the site fails the wetland hydrology requirements, then wetland hydrology is absent. Document the findings (per form instructions). Proceed to Step 8.

Step 8: Making a Wetland Determination

ACTION: Sites determined to be a wetland will be assigned the appropriate wetland label as determined by any applicable exemptions found in the current version of the NFSAM.

- Additional analysis (i.e., duration of ponding or saturation, cropping history, if production is possible) might be required to determine the appropriate label. Refer to 7 CFR, Part 12; Section 12.5 (b), *Wetland Exemptions*, and Parts 514.10 through 514.60 of the NFSAM (current edition), for further guidance assigning FSA wetland labels.
- Verify and document the scope and effect for all manipulated sites.
- If the site is a potential converted wetland then also conduct a minimal effect analysis prior to labeling the site CW or CW + year.
- Proceed to next Action or to Step 9.

The following two Step 8 actions apply only to SD NRCS.

ACTION: Large rangeland tracts, or portions thereof, that are not inventoried (NI) for potential wetlands will be outlined and labeled with an "NI." Proceed to next Action.

ACTION: Determine if indicators of potential waters of the United States (U.S.) exist on your determination area. The indicators of potential waters of the U.S. are:

- Open water, dry lake/pond beds, or mud flats on photos.
- Drainage patterns evident on available inventory tools.
- Blue lines or similar designations on USGS topographic maps and other maps.
- Features on maps labeled as stream, lake, river, creek, gulch, arroyo, etc.
- Potential waters of the U.S. should be labeled "NI." Verify in the field if the NI channel has adjacent associated wetlands and map accordingly (e.g., NI/W, NI/PC).
- Proceed to Step 9.

Step 9: Wetland Delineation

ACTION: Refer to the procedures found in the NFSAM and approved onsite procedures document(s) to complete the wetland map and Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Determination (NRCS-CPA-026E).